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*A View of Reason, and Passion, as in  
their original and present State.*

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S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Right Honourable  
The LORD-MAYOR,  
ALDERMEN,  
AND  
SHERIFFS  
OF THE  
CITY of LONDON,  
AT THE  
CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of St. Paul,  
On SUNDAY, December 21, 1735.

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By JOHN TOTTIE, M. A. Fellow of  
Worcester-College in Oxford.

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THE CITY OF LONDON  
AND THE BOROUGH OF ST. MARTIN

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## ROM. vii. 23.

*But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.*

**T**HE words, which are supposed to be spoken by St. *Paul* in the person of an unregenerated man, do plainly declare, that there are two different laws or principles in human nature, which, tho' there ought to be a subordination observed, are for ever striving for the mastery with each other; and that, where our nature is not powerfully assisted, the rebellious principle is too likely to prevail. This is a truth, which has been acknowledged and lamented by the wisest of men in all ages: And who is there amongst us that is not ready to assent to it? or that does not experimentally feel a perpetual conflict betwixt his Reason and his Passions? And must not the very best of us, who has made the greatest improvements in virtue,

virtue, be ingenuous enough to own, that it is a work of no small pains and difficulty, to put reason in a capacity of maintaining her superiority ? And yet nothing can be in possession of a clearer title to it, or of one that in speculation is more universally allowed of. A faculty, by which we think, and apprehend, and are conscious of what passes within and without us ; which enables us to weigh things in the balance, and to examine their relations and tendencies ; to consider every action in its motive and consequences ; to distinguish good from evil, the greater from the less, the real from the apparent : This faculty, I say, so far as the abilities of it will serve, must have an inalienable right to direct, govern, and controul every creature that is endued with it, in every instance. Whence then comes it to pass, that our passions (by which I shall at present understand not only those properly so called, but likewise in that less exact sense of the word, wherein it is sometimes used by moralists themselves, the whole tribe of sensitive inclinations, and corporeal affections and impressions whatsoever, that are apt to darken and pervert the understanding.) Whence comes it to pass, that our passions, blind as they are, should yet hurry us away in direct opposition to the authority of our reason, insomuch that the condition of humanity has been esteemed a most unreasonable kind of servitude, wherein we are rigorously tied up to one law,  
and



and yet unfortunately under the power of another?

A solution of this question had long exercised, and always proved an insuperable difficulty to human wisdom; which, after all its efforts, could neither be able to guess at the cause of the distemper, nor to find out a remedy for the cure. The usual event was, that mens enquiries in this affair generally run them into the most absurd and impious suppositions; the wild suggestions of fancy, and at the same time, greatly injurious to the Majesty and Perfection of the Supreme BEING. Some, perhaps from having observed how little predominant reason was in our constitution, would not allow us so much as to be the work of an intelligent Being, but supposed us to be the effect of blind chance, and struck out at random from the jumble of atoms; and so might deduce the irregularity of our conduct from the disagreeing seeds of our composition. Sometimes, it is well known, recourse has been had to two opposite, independent, supreme principles, whereof one is supposed to have equal power and inclination to create evil and breed confusion in the world, as the other to promote order and happiness in it. At other times, the All-gracious God of the universe has been blasphemously represented as an arbitrary and capricious Being, who can feel a pleasure in the wretchedness of his creatures, and created mankind for no other purpose, than to divert himself with their follies

follics and inconsistencies. These, with several other notions no less extravagant or impious, can only serve to shew us, into what absurdities of error the mind of man may wander, when it is not guided and enlightened by the spirit of truth. To that let us repair for our satisfaction in this important point, and endeavour to learn a true state of the case by the only means we can ever possibly attain to it, the assistance of divine revelation. In order to do this, and to vindicate the dispensation of Providence, which has been impeach'd upon this account, it may be necessary to enquire,

I. What degree of perfection man may have been supposed to have been originally possessed of, with regard to the powers of his mind.

II. To examine how it came to pass, that man degenerated from his first condition, and wherein the nature of that degeneracy consists.

III. To consider how far the goodness of God has put it in the power of mankind to recover their original loss.

I. *First*, I am to enquire what degree of perfection man may have been supposed to have been originally possessed of, with regard to the powers of his mind.

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The word of truth has inform'd us, that GOD created man originally in *uprightness*; that he *made him a little lower than the angels*; and form'd him after his own *image*. Of the Divine Nature a finite being can be but a very imperfect transcript at best; and therefore, when man is said to have been formed after the Divine Image, we can, in relation to his essence, collect no more, than that he was enlightned in his formation by a degree of Reason (which is indeed of divine extraction) in such a proportion as was requisite for a rational creature of such a particular limited capacity. And even of finite rational creatures, man is, for ought we know, the lowest; sure we are, that there are many more excellent above him. When therefore he is said to have been created in *uprightness*, it does not infer such a power and rectitude of nature, as if he were a being of pure intellect and unmixt Reason; for that indeed would be to make the first man and his descendants of a different species. It can only imply, that his nature was as perfect as the very condition of that nature could admit; and that he had it in his power to secure to himself the possession and continuance of all that happiness, in which he was placed, and for which he was designed. Man was doubtless from the beginning *sensitivo-rationalis*: a reasonable creature indeed; but made up likewise of Passions and appetites: and consequently one great perfection of his nature consisted in this, that the inferior faculties were

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uniformly regular in obedience and subordination to the supreme. Reason, in its best state, could be but human Reason; and if it was at first more quick-sighted and penetrating, had a greater sway and authority than in its present state, one great cause, next to the innate vigour of the faculty itself, might be, not because human nature was devoid of Passions, but because those Passions offer'd no violence, were no impediment to reason; but suffered it to exert the full extent of its power, unbiass'd, uncorrupted, undisturb'd. How far under these circumstances the force of man's Reason might go, I am neither able nor concerned to determine. I shall only remark what more than one, even of the ancient philosophers, thought they had reason to assert, That if our minds were entirely free and disengaged from all influence of Passion, and were not injur'd by corporeal impressions, they would as immediately and truly discern what was right and wrong in all things relating to human conduct, as the unblemish'd eye can perceive and distinguish colours.

And if we look upon the Passions under the same circumstances, while they continued in all dutiful subjection to their governing principle, they will be so far from appearing what some have too rashly pronounced them to be *simply and in themselves evil*; that they will be found to have been implanted in human nature for very wise and gracious purposes; even



as the springs of action, and the inlets of innocent pleasures.

If we consider them in the former light, we must know that pure intelligences alone are actuated by Reason only ; but beings of a mixt nature have different provinces assigned to their different powers. And altho' Reason itself, even in its present incumbrances, does often incite man to action, and did doubtless much oftner, when it was in its purer state ; yet one chief employment of it seems ever to have been, to manage, regulate, and direct to the best ends those motions which the Passions, the great principles of action, began in the mind, but would want the skill to conduct. These being more liable to be irritated and excited, were most proper to impell ; while the more sedate principle, Reason, sat, as a pilot, at the helm, to keep man steady in his course, and to steer him with the greater security. And what irregularities or disorders do we think ever could arise from the impulse of the Passions, as they were originally implanted in man ; when they moved in him no otherwise than as the winds in the garden wherein he was placed, never violent and tempestuous, but gently working in the moral world, as the other in the natural, preventing the mind from stagnating in rest and inactivity ?

Besides this, there was another great end, for which the beneficent Author of nature inserted the Passions in the human mind, which was, that they might be the inlets of innocent pleasures.

pleasures. For altho' pleasures purely intellectual, and such as flow from the due exercise of Reason alone, are allowed to be more exalted in their kind, and more refin'd in their nature than others; yet pleasures of an inferior order are by no means to be excluded or condemned, since they arise from the very condition of humanity. If man had been form'd, like the angels, spiritual and incorporeal, he would indeed have been incapable of having any perception of other than spiritual pleasures: but as one part of him only came down from heaven, and the other was formed out of the dust of the earth; and as from the union of soul and body do result Passions and bodily inclinations; the gratification of them must be so far from being destructive of the constitution of human nature, that one part of man's happiness must necessarily consist therein. And as it is evident, that man, for some part at least of his duration, was design'd to be an inhabitant of the earth; it was therefore a gracious provision in his Creator, to accommodate him with such faculties, as were best calculated to make his situation agreeable to him, and to sweeten his journey thro' life. But still more conspicuous will the Divine Goodness appear in the formation of man, when we reflect that his own nature, and the relation he bore to things about him, were constituted in such a manner, that what was designed to promote his happiness, might by no means prove a snare or an occasion unto him of falling; since the Passions of man could  
never



never receive so full and perfect a gratification, as when they were obedient to the law, and submitted themselves to the direction of Reason. This is even still in general the case, tho' things are much alter'd for the worse; and without doubt, had man continued in his native perfection, all the pleasurable enjoyments of his life would have been uniformly and unexceptionably co-incident with right Reason, and agreeable to the practice of virtue.

And now upon a review, who would not even almost envy the condition of our first parent? Created in innocence, blest with every useful power, and crown'd with all the perfection that his nature was capable of? An exact harmony subsisting between all his faculties, all mutually conspiring to make his happiness compleat: his Reason vigorous, clear and serene; his Passions moderate, contented, pleasing: Reason not condemning the extravagance of Passion; nor Passion ever murmuring at the authority of Reason: *No law in his members warring against the law of his mind*; no variance betwixt duty and inclination; no thwarting and contradiction betwixt understanding and sense. So abundantly gracious and bountiful was the LORD unto man in his creation: happy would it have been for him and his posterity, had he been as kind to himself. But the innocence and perfection of his nature were inseparably united to each other; and the one was forfeited, when the other was lost. This consideration

tion will lead me to the second part of my enquiry, namely,

II. How it came to pass, that man degenerated from his first condition, and wherein the nature of that degeneracy consists.

How perfect soever we may suppose human nature to have been, and how well soever accommodated to perpetuate all the felicity the capacity of it could contain; yet it could not be, that it should have been such an absolute degree of perfection, as that a diminution of it must have been a natural impossibility. That is the sole prerogative of the infinite BEING, who is *the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*; and is what every finite creature, whatever advances it may have made towards perfection, must fall infinitely short of. The angels, we know, transgressed, and fell from their exalted state: man therefore, that was lower than the angels, might also by transgression fall from his. Human Reason, which never was of that kind, which neither slumbers nor sleeps, could not always be vigilant or secure. A crafty tempter, who knew every avenue to the soul, might attack it in an unguarded hour, and might prove but too successful in his malicious attempt. In effect, such was the event: the stratagem of the tempter took place, and the destruction of man's nature was accomplished under the specious plea of carrying it to a Divine perfection. Man nevertheless could have nothing to justify his conduct; and but little to offer even in extenuation of his crime.

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No temptation could be pleaded in excuse of a violation of the plain and positive command of God ; which was moreover guarded by a terrible denunciation importing the consequences of his transgression, in order to imprint more deeply on his mind that important truth, which, by the Divine appointment, is founded in the nature of things, *that sin is the never-failing source of woe*. Such indeed was it to man in an exemplary degree ; and that it might be branded with the severest marks of God's displeasure, it was punished with consequences even more than merely natural, since not only the faculties of man were impair'd, but even the earth itself felt a curse for the guilt of its inhabitant.

The share of punishment that human nature underwent, let our own experience and consciences declare ; for however unable we may be to form to ourselves a true notion of its original perfection, a sense of the depravity of it must be in every one's breast, because all must know what they feel. Let us then ask ourselves, if we do not perceive our noblest faculty, that of Reason (notwithstanding all that pride and prejudice can suggest) to be, when left to itself, an uncertain guide, weak and dubious, encumber'd with difficulties, distracted with contrary opinions, frequently assenting to the wrong, and the more self-sufficient, the more liable to mistake. As materials are collected for the exercise and improvement of it by slow and painful degrees, here a little, and there

there a little ; so, after a tedious course of discipline, it is often found to have gain'd but little strength, or to have made a progress, that can be boasted of, in any useful knowledge. How often is it the business of our riper years, to correct the wrong impressions we had received, and rested satisfied with in our more early ones ; and the task frequently unfinish'd, even when our grey hairs appear ? And after all, where it has made the greatest improvements, and has been most fortunate in its enquiries ; where it has been directed to the right way, and would conduct us in it ; how impotent is it to influence the will, so as to make us act where we think aright ? We are cool to its advice, regardless of its admonitions, and rebellious to its authority, even where there are no strong temptations to withdraw us from our allegiance ; much more, when our impetuous Passions arise, and silence the still voice of Reason. For they are no longer under the guidance and controul of that superior principle ; but *the law in our members, warring against the law of our mind, has brought us into captivity to the law of sin.* For must we not own, that where our Reason is not absolutely gain'd over to the dominion and interest of our Passions, where it is not even prostituted to inflame them (which is too often the case, tho' certainly the most abject and deplorable condition, that a reasonable creature can fall into.) Must we not own, that where our Reason does its utmost to maintain the little remains of



of its authority, that it meets with an almost constant and vigorous opposition from the Passions; that the conflict is too unequal betwixt them; that we are led captive of our lusts against the clearest conviction of our minds, and, at the same time that we condemn and deplore, do still pursue our infelicity?

Let me by no means be thought to represent human nature worse than it is, or to aggravate the miseries of our condition; but if we will be dealt with sincerely (and flattery will not mend the matter;) this is in truth the state of the case; this is the wretched condition of humanity in its degeneracy and corruption; sufficient cause of humiliation to every considerate mind, tho' the boasted strength and pride of infidelity. But it is the peculiar character of folly, to be always self-sufficient; and none are so apt to reject the kind offers of assistance, as those who, thro' the weakness of understanding, want it the most. If indeed the difference betwixt the wise and the unwise consisted only in this: That the one had a sense and feeling of the depravity of his nature; but was withal in an utter incapacity of relieving himself; and the other was totally blind to imperfections in themselves incurable; the state of the latter would certainly be most eligible. But since the goodness of God is such, that he has in his wrath remembered mercy; and, by means that could not have entered into the heart of man to conceive, has put it in our power to

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recover

recover the original perfection of our nature, in such a measure, as to prepare us by the improvement of it here, for a more exalted degree of perfection and happiness hereafter; every man that is not anxious to enquire after these means, and is not eager joyfully to embrace them when found, must for ever give up all pretensions to the name of Rational. This enquiry I proposed to be the subject of the latter part of my discourse; namely,

III. By what gracious method mankind was put in a capacity of recovering themselves from their forlorn condition; and how far the means are effectual to bring about this great end.

No sooner had man transgressed, and the just sentence of condemnation had passed upon him, his mind yet full of the horrors of his guilt, and punishment severely aggravated by the reflection of its being necessarily entailed upon his posterity; but GOD was pleased to relieve his insupportable weight of grief, by the prospect of a mighty Saviour and Deliverer to come in that remarkable assurance, *That the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.* At distant times, and to different persons, the gracious promise was renewed; and, as the time of his appearance approached, the declarations concerning him were more clear and circumstantial. A superior dignity of person; the manner of his being brought into the world; the time of his appearance in it; the offices he was to discharge; the lowly estate he should



should assume amongst men; and the barbarous indignities he would undergo, which were to terminate in a shameful death; are all distinctly foretold, that the world might not be at a loss to acknowledge its Deliverer, and might rejoice in the greatness of its salvation. But what heart can conceive, or tongue express, the depth of the riches of the goodness of God to mankind, when the Person engaged in the great work of atonement and reconciliation appears to be no less than the SON of GOD himself; who united the Divine Nature to the Human, that he might by the one be the proper representative of those for whom the redemption was wrought, and by the other, give a price to those stripes by which all mankind were to be healed. The ransom and propitiation was, by the sacrifice of CHRIST; a doctrine ever to be insisted on as the very foundation of Christianity: but my present undertaking rather leads me to consider, how far the means he has furnished us withal, as the Author of our religion, and which we must constantly remember, are by his death alone render'd effectual to salvation, can contribute to rectify the depravity of human nature in its present state: which is no more than a necessary preparation in order to its being carried to a more glorious and supernatural perfection in a future. The original excellency and rectitude of man's nature has been before observ'd to arise in a great measure from the power of his Reason, and the absolute subjection of his Passions; and on the

contrary, the degeneracy of it to consist in the influence that the Passions have gain'd to enfeeble and pervert his Reason. Whatever therefore can supply us with the best means to reduce them as far as possible to their ancient state, so far as it is available to that purpose, must have a proportionable tendency to rectify the depravity of our nature. Now that Christianity does furnish us with the best aids imaginable to accomplish this work, will appear, if we consider, that it contains the truest system of knowledge to improve and guide our Reason, and moreover fortifies it with the strongest motives and assistance to subdue and regulate our Passions.

*First*, Let us briefly enquire how far our Reason is indebted to Christianity in point of religious instruction.

Let the advocates for the sufficiency of human Reason deal ingenuously, and tell us, how far the strength of that alone has been able to carry mankind independent of Divine Revelation; and then we shall be the better able to judge, what improvements it has actually received from Revelation. And in this case, I must reject all instances from later systems (as they are called) of natural Religion; because (beside that in several momentous points, the best of them are manifestly deficient) most of the important truths which are there delineated, however put off under a philosophical dress, were imbib'd and first received, as they have indeed their sanction, from Revelation;



lation ; and surely it is a very unfair way of proceeding, to argue from the assent to, or use that may be made of truths thus discovered to the discovery of those truths itself. And even in relation to the great masters of Reason in ancient days, it may not be easy to determine how far even they might have been supplied with notions handed down in an imperfect manner, by tradition, from an original Revelation ; which, as a *light, faintly shining in a dark place*, might serve, if not to dissipate the obscurity, yet to fix their view, and to preserve them from deviating into any gross absurdities and errors. However to these let us appeal, and see how far they could trace out, by the force of their Reason, (for it is plain, that in many cases, their own Reason alone did direct them) the true principles of Religion, or settle a rule of conduct.

Now of these, some by the dint of reasoning had argued themselves out of the belief of the very Being of a God. Others, who profess'd to own his existence, did yet in reality deny it, by disallowing his providence, and his most essential Attributes. And even the most zealous advocates for a DEITY, when they came to explain their notions, supposed him, after all their refinements, still to be but of a more exalted kind of matter ; that is to say (if their reasonings were fairly pursued) of such a nature as did in effect destroy the very supposition they would support. I need not enquire what the superstructure of religion must be, where

where there was either no foundation at all, or a very precarious one to support it.

As much were they at a loss to settle a rule of life, or to enforce it when settled. Open Immorality was the profession of one sect, who affirm'd sensual pleasures to be the greatest good. The rest of them had some particular vices to patronize; and, as the authority of all was equal, every one that affected philosophy (which yet few had either opportunity, or capacity, or inclination to understand) might adhere to that scheme of it which he liked best, and justify the indulgence of all or any favourite Passion, even by the principles of his sect. \* One indeed more than ordinary genius has been much extoll'd by the Patrons of Reason, and been recommended as one that had clearer notions of the principles and duties of religion, than they own the rest to have had; and yet, I fear, he too will begin to sink in their esteem, when they reflect that he acknowledged and greatly lamented his own ignorance and uncertainty, concerning things of the highest and most universal importance, and ardently wish'd for what they enjoy and yet neglect, the assistance of a Divine Revelation. That is, after all, the unerring rule, that must teach the simple, and direct the wise: containing things sublime indeed, and mysterious, because it discovers truths that are so in their nature; yet clear and plain and obvious, as a rule of duty, because Reli-

*Socrates.*

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gion was design'd to be the universal science of mankind. By this the studious and the learn'd may enlarge their thoughts, elevate their contemplation, encrease their knowledge, and ascertain their notions: By this even the illiterate and the mechanick may learn the true state of their condition, and the whole compass of their duty; the only necessary knowledge, and wherein the meanest Christian has the advantage of the most able Philosopher. For whatever is there declared, does not depend upon the precarious decisions of human Reason or human Authority, to be admitted or rejected at pleasure; but is sure and infallible, carrying with it irresistible conviction and power, as it was confirmed by the immediate testimony of Heaven, and is not of men, but of God: And worthy of God: for where do we find the great principles of religion so fully and clearly explained either in regard to belief or practice; while faith has a natural tendency to improve us in morality, and morality is itself refin'd? Whence can we form to ourselves so just a conception of the nature and perfections of God? What besides could have certainly inform'd us of the relations we bear to him, and of the homage he requires us to pay? Where else can man ever learn that important lesson, *to know himself*, in regard both to the dignity and infirmities of his nature, and from that knowledge, to direct his aims, and to pursue his happiness? How could he otherwise have been assured, wherein his Final happiness consisted;

sisted; or what were the necessary means of attaining it? What had graciously been done on God's part, and what remain'd to be done on his own? All these things are so distinctly revealed, and the obligation of our duty is so certain, and the rule of it so compleat, that whatever reparation all necessary knowledge can make to human Reason, or whatever forces that can assist it withal, to restore it to its ancient dominion over the Passions, have been abundantly supplied by Christianity.

But the attainment of knowledge is but a necessary step to a more important work, namely, the conformity of our actions to that knowledge: and to bring this about, Reason alas! let it be ever so well instructed, often finds itself to be too feeble and impotent. It does perhaps clearly enough apprehend and acknowledge the good that ought to be followed, and knows the method of attaining to it, but cannot always determine the will to the pursuit of it. " Let a man (says one \* who had well  
 " consider'd human understanding) be never  
 " so well persuaded of the advantages of virtue, that it is as necessary to a man, who  
 " has any great aims in this world, or hopes  
 " in the next, as food to life; yet till he  
 " hungers and thirsts after righteousness, till  
 " he feels an uneasiness in the want of it,  
 " his will will not be determined to any action  
 " in pursuit of this confessed greater good;

\* *Locke's Essay, B. 2. ch. 21. § 35.*

" but



"but any other uneasiness he feels in himself  
 "shall take place, and carry his will to other  
 "actions." Now this uneasiness, which is so  
 apt to be humoured at the expence of our Reason,  
 is created by the stimulation of irregular  
 desires: it will not therefore be sufficient to  
 have our Reason rightly informed, unless there  
 be also an effectual restraint put upon the *sen-  
 sual appetites*; and unless by a due influence to  
 work upon the *Passions properly so called*, there  
 is a conviction wrought in the heart as well  
 as the judgment: And it will consequently ap-  
 pear to the great advantage of Christianity, if  
 it be found to have a peculiar efficacy in both  
 these respects. For here it will be necessary to  
 observe the distinction betwixt the sensual ap-  
 petites and the Passions; inasmuch as of the for-  
 mer no more is to be desired than that they  
 would always act in obedience to Reason,  
 without injuring or obstructing it; but the lat-  
 ter, moreover, may even join with it in the  
 same spiritual cause, and be active and assisting  
 in carrying on the same work. And it must  
 always be esteemed a very useful part of reli-  
 gion, since Reason in its best improvements, is  
 found insufficient to determine the will aright,  
 to bring over the Passions to its interests, to  
 unite them in the same friendly views, and to  
 make even those powers of the mind, which  
 are so apt to be at enmity with Reason, its  
 friends and associates. For it is in vain to  
 think, that the fitness of things, or the beauty

of virtue, or any other merely intellectual motive should alone have a general influence to rectify human conduct. So long as the Passions are apart, and a very active part too of our constitution, they will have employment; and, if not directed by proper means to their proper objects, will be very likely to fix themselves, and carry our desires along with them, upon such as are at hand, and are oftentimes most unworthy. For which reason, it is the singular excellence of our religion, that it is most prevalent to withdraw the Passions, as much as possible, from the base or trifling objects they are conversant with here below, to fix them principally upon such as it is our true and everlasting interest to pursue. When, beside the reasonableness of our duty to engage us to the discharge of it, there is moreover a mighty reward, glory and honour, and immortality and eternal happiness, set before us; how must it work upon every generous Passion, to raise our views and determine us immovably in our choice? When, on the contrary, sin and disobedience do not only appear wrong in themselves, but likewise amazingly dreadful in their consequences; and not only the commands, but the terrors of the LORD persuade, threatening indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil; how must all our aversions take the alarm, and make us detest and shun what we must otherwise pursue tho', we condemned? In short,  
our



our holy religion does by a variety of motives, adapted to the Passions as well as the Reason of mankind, endeavour to engage them all in the cause of virtue ; whilst they are severally influenced, according to their respective natures, by the greatest final good, or greatest evil ; and do accordingly determine the will, by raising proportionable desires or aversions in the mind. And so long as these desires and aversions, thus raised and directed to their proper objects, are kept alive in our hearts, we shall have comparatively no appetite or relish for any thing, but what tends to our supreme happiness ; no vicious or depraved longings ; but shall as certainly hunger and thirst after righteousness, as they that hunger and thirst after righteousness are sure to be filled.

Especially, if to this we add, what it is another particular excellency of Christianity to effect, the regulation and subjection of our sensual appetites : a thing so strongly insisted upon by our religion, that it is a necessary qualification of being a faithful disciple of Christ's ; as it will be impossible to make any considerable progress towards Christian perfection, so long as we are under the dominion of our sinful lusts. But as it appears, that the sense of an obligation tho' clear and evident, is not always strong enough to enforce it ; especially where temptations are pleasing, and have perhaps been long gaining strength from an uninterrupted

compliance ; we have moreover all the directions that are useful, and all the assistance that can be wanted, to give our duty the ascendant over our corrupt inclinations. As our danger generally arises from our security, our religion prescribes to us in a particular manner watchfulness and prayer ; by the one, to secure ourselves from surprize or delusion ; and by the other, to fix in our minds an habitual sense of our duty, and to render our selves fit objects of that grace and assistance we implore. Even the more severe injunction of mortification and self-denial, which has been thought to bear too hard upon the character of a gracious Law-giver, will upon examination be found to be no other than kind and wholesom discipline. For a little acquaintance with our own nature may teach us, that we are apt to grow upon indulgence ; and, as the extreme bounds of virtue do insensibly run into vice, so it will be the part of discretion not to give ourselves leave to expatiate as far as the widest limits even of lawful pleasures will permit ; but to restrain our selves sometimes even from innocent enjoyments, that we may be accustomed to command our selves, and may, by this kind of exercise, either prevent all irregular solicitations, or at least be better enabled to withstand them.

But lest, after all, our unruly Passions and appetites should prove too obstinate to be subdued by a sense of duty, or any prudential methods



methods the Divine Wisdom has prescribed; God has vouchsafed, in compassion to the infirmities of our nature, to promise it the assistance of his Holy Spirit; which, if we reject not its gracious overtures, is perpetually employ'd in instilling good motions into our souls, in co-operating with our better part, and fortifying it against these our most dangerous, because most agreeable enemies. This indeed is the peculiar advantage and glory of our religion; that the blessed Author of it has promised to all those who sincerely embrace it, and devoutly make use of the means thereby prescribed, an abundant measure and encrease of his grace; without which, all our sufficiency is weakness, and all our endeavours after perfection will be vain and ineffectual. This it is, which must make the knowledge of our duty useful, the practice of it easy, and the motives to it prevalent; as it is this alone which can strengthen our Reason, can purify the corrupt part of our natures, refine and exalt our Passions, and spiritualize our affections. This it is, which finishes the Christian; who, when it has taken possession of his soul, and united itself to his very nature, will then, and not till then, have an exquisite sense of the excellence, and taste the pleasures of religion. For then shall the commandments of God be his delight, yea, sweeter than honey unto his mouth: duty and inclination shall go hand in hand; and *the*  
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war betwixt the law in his members, and the law of his mind, shall cease: His nature shall be renewed and carried to the highest degree of perfection that it is capable of in its present state; all He, that has purified him from sin, shall raise him incorruptible from the grave, and compleat his happiness in glory, which was begun in obedience and grace.

**F I N I S.**

